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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION SEGMENT: FOLLOW-UP TO POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Canada: draft resolution

Progress on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/120

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 44/211 of 22 December 1989, 46/219 of 20 December 1991, 47/199 of 22 December 1992 and 50/120 of 20 December 1995, in which the General Assembly invited the Economic and Social Council, at its substantive session of 1996, to consider, inter alia, the issues of harmonization and administrative services, common premises and monitoring and evaluation on the basis of progress reports and appropriate recommendations by the Secretary-General,

Recalling also General Assembly resolutions 48/162 of 20 December 1993 and 50/227 of 24 May 1996,

[Strongly reaffirming that the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the operational activities of the United Nations system must be enhanced by, inter alia, a substantial increase in their funding from all sources on a predictable, continuous and assured basis, commensurate with the increasing needs of developing countries, as well as through the full implementation of General Assembly resolutions 47/199, 48/162, 50/120 and 50/227,]

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on progress on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/120 on the triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations

development system, and on the management process for implementation requested in paragraph 52 of General Assembly resolution 50/120, 1/

1. Welcomes the report of the Secretary-General; 1/

2. Reaffirms the need for simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures in order to increase the overall effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the operational activities for international development of the United Nations development system, as well as the need to facilitate and increase national execution, bearing in mind the need not to overburden the host Government; to this end, the United Nations development system is requested to report to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1997 on progress made towards the following:

(a) Improving the definition and guidelines for the programme approach, bearing in mind the need to further simplify and harmonize procedures and to allow sufficient flexibility for their application at the field level;

(b) Promoting a common understanding of capacity-building concepts and their operationalization, as well as on ways of enhancing the sustainability of capacity-building;

(c) Facilitating and increasing synergies between the activities of the funds and programmes of the United Nations system through the use of harmonized and synchronized programming and, as far as possible, enhancing collaboration in all areas of programming, including evaluations and mid-term reviews;

(d) Developing and implementing an agreed methodology to establish common country databases in consultation with national Governments;

3. Urges the funds and programmes of the United Nations system to finalize work on the harmonization of their budget presentations in time for a final decision to be made by their respective Executive Boards in advance of the biennium 1998-1999, and to include in this work a common presentational framework for the budget based on agreed definitions and usage of budget terms and the identification of additional steps required for further harmonization and improved transparency;

4. Emphasises the need to accelerate efforts to complete a common manual based both on a building-block approach and on a need to integrate and clarify existing guidelines, including the operationalization of the outcomes of the recent series of major United Nations conferences;

5. Expresses concern at the lack of progress made towards the use of common administrative services and requests the funds and programmes of the United Nations system, with due concern given to effectiveness, efficiency and the impact of their activities, to:

1/ E/1996/64 and Add.1 and 2 and Add.2/Corr.1 and 2, and Add.3.

(a) Simplify and harmonize administrative and financial procedures in a systematic way and at all levels, so that common administrative services can be established where feasible;

(b) Work towards increased delegation of decision-making authority and accountability to the country level and, where appropriate, the regional level, and their harmonization among funds and programmes;

(c) Set measurable targets and time-frames for the achievement of common administrative services, including the identification of priority areas for enhanced efforts, such as telecommunications, and financial and personnel-related services;

(d) Develop guidelines on how to establish and operate a common services account;

6. Reaffirms the need to raise the target for common premises on a case-by-case basis, taking into account cost-benefit analysis and operational sustainability, using lessons learned during the implementation of this request and avoiding an increased burden on host countries; requests the funds and programmes of the United Nations system to develop a plan of action, administrative arrangements and a time-frame for the implementation of this request; and encourages the United Nations specialized agencies and regional offices to share those common premises where practicable;

7. Stresses the importance of strengthening the monitoring and evaluation activities of the United Nations development system; also stresses the significance of promoting at the country level, under the leadership of Governments, close monitoring and evaluation collaboration among national Governments, the United Nations development system and relevant development partners and, in this context, reiterates the need for the United Nations development system to support, when requested by Governments, the strengthening of national evaluation capacities; and requests that joint evaluations of operational activities, including thematic evaluations and coordinated programme reviews, be undertaken, making the fullest possible use of national capacity in this area;

8. Reaffirms the need for the United Nations development system to increase its consideration and application of lessons learned from monitoring and evaluation activities, and calls for a system-wide effort to monitor and report on the frequency and quality of programmed and completed evaluations, the identification and use of lessons learned, and the number of joint evaluations planned and undertaken;

9. Requests the Secretary-General to ensure that the Economic and Social Council and the governing bodies of individual funds and programmes and specialized agencies are provided with information on evaluation activities that is quantifiable and comparable, and that specifies an evaluation's type, coverage, scope, timing, and compliance;

10. Urges all funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations development system to identify measurable targets to strengthen their monitoring and evaluation capabilities, to incorporate those targets into their respective management plans to implement General Assembly resolution 50/120 and to intensify their cooperation in the development of monitoring and evaluation methodologies;

11. Requests the Secretary-General, in his progress report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/120, for submission to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1997, to consider, inter alia, capacity-building, field- and regional-level coordination and resources; also requests the Secretary-General, in the context of field- and regional-level coordination, to highlight the problems encountered, make appropriate recommendations and discuss the functioning of thematic groups and field-level committees, and, in regard to resources, to include an analytical assessment of the implications on operational activities for development of the decline in core resources, where this has occurred, and of the increase in non-core resources, where this has occurred; and further requests the Secretary-General to make recommendations on how best to implement section I of annex I to General Assembly resolution 50/227.